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Wherever high-paid offices are created by liquor legislation, those offices become the objects of political contention. When a multitude of offices are created in the execution of liquor laws, they furnish the means of putting together a strong political machine. Just this has happened under the dispensary system in South Carolina, where a machine of great capacity for political purposes has been created in a short time, with the governor of the state as its engineer. . . . The activity of liquor dealers' associations in municipal politics all over the United States is in one sense an effect of the numerous experiments in liquor legislation which have been in progress during the last thirty years. The traffic, being attacked by legislation, tries to protect itself by controlling municipal and state legislators.

The committee concludes that "it cannot be positively affirmed that any one kind of liquor legislation has been more successful than another in promoting real temperance"; but that, nevertheless, "the wise course for the community at large is to strive after all external, visible improvements, even if it be impossible to prove that internal, fundamental improvement accompanies them." To this they might well have added — what their volume clearly demonstrates — that the only "external, visible improvements" which experience has shown to be such in fact as well as in name are the products of moderate measures that have aimed at maintaining order and decency rather than at a transformation of human nature or at the realization of utopias.

FRANKLIN H. GIDDINGS.

La disoccupazione e l'assicurazione degli operai. Da C. F. FERRARIS. Roma, Nuova Antologia, 1897.

The question of the unemployed is one of permanent interest. While, on the one hand, the expedients for giving employment and for satisfying the most urgent needs of the situation are multiplying in all countries, on the other hand grave questions as to the causes and the remedies of enforced idleness are bringing about wide researches on the part of students. Among the most recent publications on the question is that of Professor Ferraris, of the University of Padua, who has profited by the ample literature that already exists on the subject, and who sums up with much clearness and vigor the principal causes of the lack of employment, examining the remedies that have been tried in the chief countries and treating in a fresh, broad way the newer arguments for the adoption of the system of insurance against unemployment.

Ferraris makes a minute analysis of the causes of unemployment, emphasizing especially those of a more strictly economic character and, above all, those connected with the influence of technical progress. Passing thence to the remedies, he, as a state socialist and a believer in social reform based on governmental action, declares that insurance against involuntary idleness is as much a social duty as are philanthropy, elementary education and insurance against sickness, accidents or old age. I shall not follow the author in his diligent and learned analyses and classifications of the various remedies that have been proposed, — relief work, labor colonies, labor bureaus, *etc.*, — but shall limit myself to the study that he makes of the proposition to insure laborers against involuntary idleness, for this presents the chief interest.

The first difficulty which this proposition meets is that of finding some law, some normal action, in a phenomenon so irregular in appearance as unemployment. Ferraris, as a first attempt to solve the difficulty, makes a laborious and acute analysis of the data relating to the unemployed that are contained in the German census of 1895 — an analysis that throws not a little light on the different degrees of intensity in unemployment, according to the forms of production, age, locality, season, *etc.* He helps us to see a certain regularity in the duration of unemployment, and thus lays a foundation for the technical arrangement of the insurance scheme.

After summing up the results of a few experiments thus far made, the author, in the last part of his work, devotes himself to the practical problem of organizing a system of insurance. He demands that this be undertaken by the public authorities, who alone — since the evil is so deep seated and extended — can really attack the problem successfully or can bring to the work means adequate for accomplishing the result in the public interest and with the greatest economy. The necessary funds are to come from three sources : (1) premiums paid by the insured, who must as far as possible share in the expense; (2) contributions of the employers, upon whom rests the obligation to look after the workman in all the contingencies of his occupation; and (3) grants from the state and other governmental bodies, so far as they may be indispensable to the carrying out of the scheme. As regards these technical arrangements the author goes into the most minute particulars.

While he believes in the efficiency of governmental action, especially in the various forms of labor insurance, Ferraris does not claim that this provision will constitute a radical remedy. But in

the face of the widespread uncertainties, doubts and illusions as to the complete reconstruction of industrial society, he declares that he is satisfied for the time being with the remedies which, though modest, may yet accomplish some good. This is not the place to discuss the question of the efficacy of state intervention. Those of us who take substantially the materialistic view of history have only very slight faith in it; but, at all events, we need not refuse to concede that in certain cases it may accomplish something. In view of the actual state of the question and of the experiments that have been made, it appears probable that in certain countries insurance against unemployment will soon come to augment our stock of social legislation. How far this system may go it is hazardous to predict, especially in view of the technical difficulties in the way; but as regards Italy, for whom, above all, Ferraris has written, it is easy to prophesy — remembering the long and painful travail of the yet unborn law for insurance against accidents, as well as the embryonic condition of that for the pension insurance — that there will be a long delay in securing this particular form of insurance.

UGO RABBENO.

UNIVERSITY OF MODENA.

Introduction to the Study of Economics. By CHARLES JESSE BULLOCK, PH.D., Instructor in Economics in Cornell University. New York, Silver, Burdett & Co., 1896. — 511 pp.

Outlines of Economic Theory. By HERBERT JOSEPH DAVENPORT. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1896. — 381 pp.

Outlines of Elementary Economics. By HERBERT JOSEPH DAVENPORT. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1897. — 280 pp.

The last quarter of a century has been extremely productive in economic thought and research. Jevons, Walras, Menger, Böhm-Bawerk, von Wieser and Clark have revolutionized method and terminology. The historical and statistical school has placed at our disposal an enormous mass of material for illustration, comment and reflection. Marshall, Wagner, Hadley and Pareto have each essayed the *magnum opus* of combining method and material in order to become the Adam Smith, or at least the John Stuart Mill, of the present generation. These are but a few names among those of many who have taken an active part in the movement; and the future historian of economic thought will have an extremely difficult task,